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OPEN-ENDED WORKING GROUP ON THE REVIEW
OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS
WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS
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Agenda item 3

GENERAL REVIEW OF ARRANGEMENTS FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS

Statement submitted by the International Council of Women, a non-governmental organization in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council, category I

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 23 and 24 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV) of 23 May 1968.

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1. The International Council of Women (ICW) has affiliates in 78 countries at all levels of development and belonging to all five continents. ICW was founded more than 100 years ago, in 1888. The president is elected, not appointed, and represents all affiliates. The current European president just finished her constitutional mandate and will be replaced by someone from another continent. At the moment, there are three candidates.

2. By virtue of its category I consultative status, ICW has a long record of cooperation with the United Nations, funding many projects with the United Nations Children's Fund, the United Nations Development Fund for Women, the United Nations Population Fund, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the World Health Organization and others over the 106 years of its existence.

3. The International Council of Women cannot accept the recent tendency to label organizations as "northern" or "southern" on the basis of the site of their headquarters. It simply is a fact that all United Nations offices are situated in the North, except for the United Nations Centre for Human

Settlements (Habitat) and the United Nations Environment Programme (Nairobi) and the International Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (Santo Domingo). Due to the necessity of being available and because of the time-consuming work, the representatives must be people living on the spot; non-governmental organizations have no financial means to pay for the travel costs. What is important is not the location of the headquarters nor the nationality of the representatives to United Nations offices, but the constituencies of the organizations and the reflection in their policy-making organs.

4. Several United Nations priorities are important to us too: environment, human rights, food and nutrition, population, social development and the advancement of the status of women. Several seminars and projects in close collaboration with United Nations organizations show this. Our main subjects for the 1995 Fourth World Conference on Women, in Beijing, are: "democracy" and "violence against women in the family and in society", with a complementary focus on the girl child.

5. ICW was immediately given the consultative status category I and has kept it. Every organization worthy of this status has to prove that it knows the procedures and the rules as established. The control commission must act more severely if needed. But we see no reason for bringing disruption between NGOs, nor for creating a needless and dangerous polarization as well. On the contrary, all NGOs should collaborate to the benefit of mankind.

6. We ask the Working Group to seriously consider these suggestions before changing the consultative status of NGOs. New arrangements must not lead to restraints in the daily work of the non-governmental organizations.